

LUKAS, NACE, GUTIERREZ & SACHS

CHARTERED

1111 NINETEENTH STREET, N.W.
SUITE 1200
WASHINGTON, DC 20036
(202) 857-3500

**WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL
(202) 828-9475**

January 29, 2004

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Room TW-B204
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service
CC Docket No. 96-45**

Dear Madam Secretary:

In accordance with Section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.1206, we hereby provide you with notice of an oral *ex parte* presentation in connection with the above-captioned proceeding.

On Wednesday, January 28, 2004, undersigned counsel, on behalf of Highland Cellular, Inc., RCC Minnesota, Inc., and Smith Bagley, Inc., met with Matt Brill, Senior Legal Advisor to Commissioner Abernathy, to discuss a number of issues currently being considered by the Commission and the Joint Board. No materials were distributed at the meeting.

In our meeting, we discussed the pending petitions for service area redefinition by RCC Minnesota, Inc. (Maine) and the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and the possible effect of the FCC's recent *Virginia Cellular Order* on them. We also discussed the pending petition of Highland Cellular, Inc. for ETC designation in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the possible effect of the *Virginia Cellular Order* on that proceeding.

Additionally, we discussed the FCC rulemaking regarding near reservation lands. Specifically, undersigned counsel urged the need to move that proceeding to a conclusion for the benefit of Native Americans and others living in areas located in proximity to reservation lands.

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If you have any questions or require any additional information, please contact undersigned counsel directly.

Sincerely,

/s/

David A. LaFuria

cc: Matthew Brill, Esq.